

Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 29 July 2020

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1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education has published guidance about [COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students on GOV.UK](#).

There is also [guidance on the apprenticeship service about COVID-19](#).

Please check [GOV.UK](#) regularly for updates.

2. Reminder: FE teacher training grants and bursaries for 2020 to 2021 academic year

The Department for Education (DfE) is offering financial support for FE teacher training for the 2020 to 2021 academic year, in priority subjects, for skilled non-graduates as well as graduates.

FE providers can apply for grants worth £18,200 to support that training in-service to teach maths, English or provide SEND specialist support.

The grants are paid to a trainee's employer (such as an FE college) to help provide the trainee with a specified teaching qualification (Level 5 or above), remission from teaching time, and additional support (such as mentoring).

In addition, DfE is offering tax-free bursaries to trainees who are training pre-service to teach high-priority shortage subjects in the FE sector.

Both the grants and bursaries are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and will continue to be awarded until the available funding has been exhausted.

For further details visit [FE funding: initial teacher education \(ITE\), academic year 2020 to 2021](#).

3. Reminder: July financial collection from colleges deadline

On Monday 15 June 2020, we released templates for a simplified, COVID-19 specific financial return from colleges. These were made available via [GOV.UK](#). We are reminding colleges to complete and return the following documents by Friday 31 July 2020:

1. [Monthly cash flow template](#) – this is a slightly updated version of the template used in July 2019
2. Financial Health Calculator – this newly developed template calculates financial health with minimal input
3. Commentary – as with most ESFA returns we will be asking for some narrative to provide some context for the financial information.

We are only requiring accounting officers to sign-off the return, as we acknowledge that it might not be possible to convene a full governing body sign-off meeting ahead of the return deadline.

We will be providing guidance and support through the [ESFA's online enquiry form](#) in place of the mailbox previously used.

The information provided will enable us to see which individual colleges need support and start to build up a picture of the underlying financial position of the sector to support conversations with other government departments.

This return will not form the basis of a formal Financial Health Assessment. An analytical review of the college returns will be carried out and if any issues are identified we will contact the college to provide support in line with the current guidelines.

We would urge colleges to contact their ESFA caseworker at the earliest opportunity if they have any concerns about their financial position or this financial return.

4. Information: 2019 to 2020 adult education budget (AEB) reconciliation

We have received helpful feedback from providers on the AEB reconciliation article published in Update on [22 July](#) and while we consider this feedback and review delivery at the R12 submission, we are withdrawing the published approach.

We will provide an update and further guidance after we have considered the data and views in August. Our original guidance issued in March was produced quickly to respond to the developing crisis and may not operate fairly across all providers. It remains our intention to fund grant providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) period and ensure a stable financial footing going into the next funding year, whilst also ensuring the appropriate use of public funds.

5. Information: supplementary bulletin to the college accounts direction and post-16 audit code of practice

We have published a supplementary bulletin to the [college accounts direction](#) and [post-16 audit code of practice](#).

This aims to help providers and their auditors with the financial reporting challenges due to COVID-19, and introduces a small number of additional requirements.

6. Information: ESFA procurement opportunity launching soon for providers to access additional funding to deliver 19 to 24 AEB funded traineeships

Following the publication of the government's [Plan for Jobs](#) which included a £111 million investment to triple the number of traineeships available, we will be launching a procurement opportunity so providers can access funding to deliver 19 to 24 AEB funded traineeships.

We will be looking for providers with the capacity to start providing high-quality traineeships quickly through a ring-fenced contract for service. Details about how we will manage new traineeship opportunities for 16 to 18-year-olds will be published shortly.

You can [read more on GOV.UK](#).

7. Information: high value courses for school and college leavers: a one year offer for 18 and 19-year-olds

On 8 July the Chancellor announced exceptional funding as part of the [wider COVID-19 skills recovery response](#) to support 18 and 19-year-olds. The additional funding will be available for one year to encourage and support delivery of selected level 2 and 3 qualifications in specific subjects and sectors in response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

We have published guidance about [what the funding is and how it can be used to support 18 and 19 year olds](#).

We have also updated the following guidance and documents to include this additional funding:

- [adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rates and formula 2020 to 2021](#)
- [AEB funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021](#)
- [Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021](#)
- [funding regulations for post-16 provision](#)
- [16 to 19 funding rates and formula guidance 2020 to 2021](#)
- [LARS class codes 2020 to 2021](#)

8. Information: 16 to 19 tuition fund

Last week we confirmed details of the 16 to 19 tuition fund for 2020 to 2021.

The 16 to 19 tuition fund is £96 million one-off funding for the 2020 to 2021 academic year only. The funding is ring-fenced and provided to support small group tuition for 16 to 19 students in English, maths, and other courses where learning has been disrupted as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

We have published full details of [who is eligible for this funding and how it will work during 2020 to 2021](#) on GOV.UK.

9. Information: 16 to 19 study programme guidance for 2020 to 2021

We have published the [16 to 19 study programme guidance for the 2020 to 2021 academic year](#).

All students funded through the 16 to 19 funding methodology must be enrolled on a study programme or T Level programme, which typically combines qualifications and other activities, and is tailored to each student's prior attainment and career goals.

The study programme guidance is designed to help providers understand their obligations and duties in relation to the provision of 16 to 19 study programmes in their institutions.

We welcome your feedback on how to make this guidance more useful – please email us with your comments and suggestions at [Post16_Level3AndBelowReview@education.gov.uk](#).

10. Information: version 2, ESFA adult education budget (AEB) funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021

We have published version 2 of the [ESFA AEB funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021](#). This version includes more information and updates on the COVID-19 Skills Recovery Package.

Main changes for version 2 are:

- sector-based work academies
- high value courses for college and school leavers: one year skills offer for 18-19 year olds
- performance management section updates to cover the Covid-19 skills recovery package

We have published a [full summary of all the changes](#) on page 84 of the document.

Please be aware that the following sections will be updated in version 3 early August and these include:

- traineeships
- sub-contracting response

The rules apply to all providers of education and training who receive AEB funding from ESFA. If you have any queries, please use our [online enquiry form](#).

11. Information: individualised learner record (ILR) funding returns guidance for 2020 to 2021

We have published the [ILR funding returns guidance for 2020 to 2021](#). This guidance includes detail in paragraph 48 and a new Annex E on data checks that can help reduce funding audit errors.

In order to help reduce the risk of "funding audit or eligibility data errors" in ILR data before it is either loaded on the ILR hub or presented to a funding auditor it would be helpful if institutions undertake some checks in accordance with the newly published advice in Annex E. We hope this advice helps reduce the levels of 16 to 19 funding audit data mistakes that result in more work for both us and our funded institutions.

The ILR funding returns guidance completes the [funding guidance for young people](#) series of booklets for 2020 to 2021.

12. Information: apprenticeship service new employer agreement

In January 2020 we published a new employer legal agreement and we confirmed in early March that if you are an employer registered with the apprenticeship service, that accepted a previous version of the agreement, and had not yet accepted the new agreement, that you would soon need to do so.

We had planned for this to be available through the service from 14 April 2020, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic we then postponed the issue date to 12 August 2020. We can now confirm that the new agreement will be available from 20 August 2020.

Accepting the new agreement will allow employers to access funding for new apprenticeship starts, as well as ensuring continued access to full functionality in the apprenticeship service.

If your organisation needs to sign the new agreement, it will be made available to you through the apprenticeship service from 20 August 2020.

We are asking all employers to accept the new agreement, ensuring that employers accessing funding via the apprenticeship service will all be doing so under the same standard terms and conditions.

Employers that want to read the new agreement before it is made available to them on 20 August can read it on [GOV.UK where it has been published for information](#).

Employers will be able to accept the new legal agreement in the 'Organisation and Agreements' section of their account. Only an Account Owner who has authority to do so on behalf of their organisation should accept the agreement.

Existing users (employers) who do not accept the new agreement will still be able to view any current apprenticeships registered on the apprenticeship service, and funding will still flow from their levy account to pay for training. However, they will be unable to make changes, advertise vacancies or record new starts until they accept the new agreement (the current agreement will continue to cover existing approved apprentices until either the apprenticeship finishes, or the new agreement is accepted).

13. Information: qualification achievement rates (QARs) for 2019 to 2020

We previously confirmed that [we will not publish any institution-level QARs in the national achievement rate tables for the 2019 to 2020 academic year in response to COVID-19](#).

We also announced that data will not be used by others, such as Ofsted, local authorities or devolved authorities or within ESFA and DfE, to hold institutions to account. Therefore, we will not supply 2019 to 2020 QARs for institutions to use internally themselves.

We are currently reviewing what data we will publish for statistical purposes in 2021 for the 2019 to 2020 QARs but, it will not contain any data at institution level.

You are still able to check your data is accurate. The [Inform May 2019 article](#) explains which funding monitoring reports impact on QARs and some of the common data issues we encounter.

Is this page useful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is there anything wrong with this page?

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Check the new rules for January 2021

Services and information

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Births, deaths, marriages and care

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